

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUANDA 00537 071300Z

43

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3525

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0537

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS AO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

1. I TALKED ON MAY 6 WITH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER GENERAL ANTONIO DA SILVA CARDOSO ABOUT THE RECENT FIGHTING IN LUANDA AND NEXT STEPS TO PRESERVE ORDER.

2. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID THAT THE RACIAL OVERTONES OF THE LATEST ROUND OF FIGHTING WERE VERY DISTURBING. SOME IDIOT WHITES DID, IN FACT, START SHOOTING INDISCRIMINATELY, AND WHITES IN THE MPLA AND FNLA WERE ALSO INVOLVED, BUT THEY DID NOT START THE VIOLENCE.

3. WHEN HE MET ON MAY 1 WITH AGOSTINHO NETO, JONAS SAVIMBI AND JOHNNY EDUARDO REPRESENTING HOLDEN ROBERTO, NETO PUT THE ENTIRE BLAME FOR THE FIGHTING ON WHITE REACTIONARIES. NETO SAW THE VIOLENCE AS A NATURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS AND RESISTED, BUT ONLY SLIGHTLY, BEFORE AGREEING TO ASK HIS SUPPORTERS TO STOP SHOOTING. I HAD HEARD THAT DURING THE MEETING SAVIMBI HAD THREATENED TO SIDE WITH THE FNLA
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LUANDA 00537 071300Z

IF NETO DID NOT COOPERATE. CARDOSO SAID THIS WAS NOT TRUE;

SAVIMBI APPEALED TO BOTH FNLA AND MPLA TO LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST. NETO AND SAVIMBI AGREED TO A SUMMIT AND JOHNNY EDUARDO UNDERTOOK TO BRIEF HOLDEN ROBERTO AND URGE HIM TO ATTEND. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER RECOMMENDED THEY MEET QUICKLY AND CERTAINLY BEFORE THE END OF MAY. CARDOSO DOUBTS THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN ANGOLA BECAUSE OF ROBERTO'S RELUCTANCE TO ENTER THE COUNTRY.

4. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WAS SCHEDULED TO HAVE A SPECIAL MEETING MAY 6 TO DISCUSS WAYS AND MEANS TO PREVENT ANOTHER ROUND OF FIGHTING. CARDOSO HAS TOLD FNLA AND MPLA HE IS FED UP WITH PROMISES OF COOPERATION AT THE TOP AND LACK OF ANY FOLLOW THROUGH AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVELS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE TOLD ME, HE DOES NOT BELIEVE MPLA HAS EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER ITS FORCES. HE RECOUNTED A REPORT HE RECEIVED FOR A UNITA OFFICER WHO ACCOMPANIED MPLA'S LUANDA COMMANDER ON A TOUR OF GARRISONS TO TELL THEM TO STOP FIRING. IN SOME CASES, REPORTED THE UNITA MAN, THE MPLA TROOPS REFUSED TO LISTEN TO THEIR COMMANDER AND ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION TOLD HIM TO SHUT UP. THE UNITA OFFICER ALSO LEARNED THAT THE TROOPS IN THE GARRISONS HAVE BEEN RECRUITING MEN OFF THE STREET AND GIVING THEM WEAPONS.

5. THE GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO GIVE ANY FIGURES ON DEAD AND WOUNDED. CARDOSO TOLD ME THE CONFIRMED BODY COUNT IS 198, BUT THAT HE BELIEVES THE ACTUAL DEATH TOLL TO BE BETWEEN 400 AND 500. HE SAID THE CONFIRMED RAPE CASES STAND AT THREE OR FOUR, BUT THE REAL TOTAL IS HIGHER. LOOTING OF WHITE HOMES AND APARTMENTS, HE SAID, TOOK PLACE ON A VERY LARGE SCALE.

6. CARDOSO BELIEVES HE CAN STILL RELY ON THE PORTUGUESE TROOPS. THEY COMPLAINED TO HIM DURING THE VIOLENCE THAT THEIR INSTRUCTIONS WERE NOT TO FIRE EXCEPT UNDER THE MOST EXTREME PROVOCATION. HE ORDERED THEM TO OPEN FIRE WHEN IN THEIR JUDGMENT THE SITUATION WARRANTED IT AND HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THEIR PERFORMANCE AFTER THAT. HE HOPES TO BE ABLE TO USE THE PORTUGUESE ONLY AS PART OF INTEGRATED FORCES, BUT HE IS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT HIS CHANCES.

7. AS FOR THE NEXT STEPS, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID THE SUMMIT MEETING IS THE KEY. MEANWHILE, THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT CAN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LUANDA 00537 071300Z

BE DONE. FNLA AND MPLA, FOR EXAMPLE, EACH HAVE OVER ONE HUNDRED GARRISONS AROUND THE CITY. THEY ARE NOT UNDER EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF OFFICERS AND THEY START SHOOTING AS SOON AS THEY HEAR SHOTS ELSEWHERE. THE GROUPS HAVE NOW AGREED TO LIMIT THEIR GARRISONS TO FIFTEEN EACH, WITH ARMED MEN IN ONLY THREE. THE PORTUGUESE HAVE VACATED BARRACKS FOR THE USE OF THE LIBERATION GROUPS, BUT THEY REFUSE SO FAR TO MOVE IN OUT OF FEAR OF AN AMBUSH.

8. THE REST OF ANGOLA IS QUIET, SAID CARDOSO, WITH THE EXCEPTION
OF THE NORTH, WHERE FNLA HAS ATTACKED MPLA GARRISONS IN SEVERAL
TOWNS.
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